

→ Fast Facts



Adolescent media use

In the 1970s, about 60 percent of high school seniors reported reading a book, magazine, or newspaper every day. In 2016, only 16 percent of high school seniors reported doing so. The number who said they did not read any books for pleasure nearly tripled, reaching one out of three by 2016. Time online spent texting and on social media amounted to about 6 hours per day by 2016. That does not include other online activities such as gaming or watching videos.

Jean M. Twenge, Gabrielle N. Martin, and Brian H. Spitzberg, "Trends in U.S. Adolescents' Media Use, 1976–2016: The Rise of Digital Media, the Decline of TV, and the (Near) Demise of Print," *Psychology of Popular Media Culture*, Online First Publication, August 16, 2018, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/ppm0000203> (retrieved October 1, 2018).



Students' computer access and use

Computer access is divided along socioeconomic lines. Smaller percentages of lower-income students reported having computer access at home in comparison to middle-to-higher income students. Lower- and higher-performing students differ in how often they use computers for practicing and building academic skills in the classroom. Computer use once or twice a week increased by as much as 5 percentage points in mathematics classes and 6 percentage points in reading classes between 2013 and 2015.

U.S. Department of Education and the Institute of Education Sciences, "NAEP - 2015 Student Questionnaires Results -Part I: Students' Access to Computers at Home and in School," https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/sq_computer (retrieved October 10, 2018).



Online news traffic referrals

Many people use Facebook as a source for news, but over a recent 16-month period, "mobile traffic has seen double-digit growth and surpassed desktop, which saw double-digit declines. On mobile, Facebook is down nearly 40 percent since January 2017, while Google Search has seen a 2x growth in that same time period. That means increases in Google Search referral traffic have more than offset any declines in Facebook referral traffic. Mobile direct traffic to publishers is now greater than traffic sent by Facebook to publishers' sites. This means consumers are now more likely to get their news by typing in a publisher URL or opening an app than by being referred through Facebook."

Josh Schwartz, "When People Can't Read News on Facebook, They Find It Anyhow," *Digital Content Next*, September 26, 2018, <https://digitalcontentnext.org/blog/2018/09/26/when-people-cant-read-news-on-facebook-they-find-it-anyhow> (retrieved October 10, 2018).



Digital technology use

After a long growth stretch, the share of Americans using various digital technologies has stayed relatively flat since 2016. Some—but not all—parts of the population have reached near-saturation levels of adoption of some technologies. The shares of U.S. adults who say they use the Internet, social media, smartphones, or tablets are all nearly identical to the shares who said so in 2016. Desktop and laptop ownership has actually decreased over the last two years—from 78 percent in 2016 to 73 percent today.

Paul Hitlin, "Use of internet, social media, digital devices plateau in US," Pew Research Center, September 28, 2018, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/09/28/internet-social-media-use-and-device-ownership-in-u-s-have-plateaued-after-years-of-growth> (retrieved October 10, 2018).

Gary Pattillo is reference librarian at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, e-mail: pattillo@email.unc.edu